

# HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 667

By DuBois

A RESOLUTION to recognize Mount Pleasant Mayor Willie Baker on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those citizens who have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm throughout their years of industry; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Willie Baker is one such estimable person who has served with distinction for many years as a civic leader for the town of Mount Pleasant and who will be taking a much-deserved retirement this year; and

WHEREAS, a native of Huntsville, Alabama, Willie Baker moved to Columbia when he was nine years old; as a young African-American, he faced the trials of racial segregation; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Baker graduated as the Valedictorian of his class at Clark High School in Mount Pleasant and attended Tennessee State University for one year before entering the military; following an honorable discharge, he returned to the university and earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Health and Physical Education before earning a Masters degree in Educational Administration; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Baker's thirty-three-year teaching career began in South Fulton, Kentucky, where he taught Algebra, English, and Social Studies and coached boys' basketball; after one year, he was recruited to Lawrenceburg, where he taught for three years; and

WHEREAS, he went on to teach and coach for Clark High school, which he led to a 22<sup>nd</sup> District Championship; and

WHEREAS, Willie Baker ensured his place in history as a pioneer when he assumed the position of Head Coach at Haylong School, becoming the first African-American Head Coach of a predominantly white school in the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, he continued his historic accomplishments in 1985, when he was appointed the first African-American mayor in the State of Tennessee; he served as the Mayor of Mount Pleasant until 1989 and is again serving in that position until his retirement this year; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Baker has also served on the Mount Pleasant Commission in some capacity for many years, and humbly attributes his success on the Commission to the citizens of Mount Pleasant; and

WHEREAS, beyond his many accomplishments, Mayor Baker is most grateful for the love and support of his wife, Helen; his six children, and his eleven grandchildren. His success is a tribute to the memory of his beloved daughter, Sharon Yvonne Baker Blair; and

WHEREAS, Willie Baker exemplifies the spirit and allegiance to family and community that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Mayor Baker has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his colleagues; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we extend to Mount Pleasant Mayor Willie Baker our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.